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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION SUDAN/THAILAND - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Wednesday morning's Yomiuri front-paged a report claiming that the cost of a USMC Futenma replacement facility at Camp Schwab in Okinawa would likely come to 300-350 billion yen, 100 billion yen less than the cost of the original Henoko plan.

¶1. "Put an End to Tragedy in Sudan" The business daily Nihon Keizai editorialized (5/10): "There are growing hopes that the human crisis in Darfur may be coming to an end. Though representatives from the Sudanese government and the largest antigovernment militia reached a peace agreement last week, the outlook for peace is not necessarily bright. Truces have been broken in the past. The international community needs to commit itself to making sure both sides implement the agreement.... The accord comes as a result of the peace offensive launched by the African Union (AU) two years ago, backed by the US and the European Union (EU).

¶2. "In particular, President Bush contributed by sending a letter to antigovernment forces in the final stages of the negotiations calling for them to compromise and conclude an agreement with the government. The commitment of the US and Europe may signal an attempt to counter China's deepening ties with Sudan, an oil-producing nation. China has been making huge investments there since the latter half of 1990s and has been importing oil in return."

¶3. "New Election to Put Thai Politics Back on Track" An editorial in the liberal Asahi commented (5/10): "A new election will be held in Thailand following the previous general election last month. The country's Constitutional Court nullified the April vote on the grounds that the secret ballot was not ensured and that the campaign was

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too short. The new election is likely to calm the political confusion in Thailand that was triggered by suspicions that Premier Thaksin's family was involved in massive stock dealings.... Opposition parties are expected to participate this time.... King Bhumibol was instrumental in averting the crisis....

14. "The new election will likely be held after the 60th anniversary of King Bhumibol's enthronement in mid-June.... Although it may be difficult for the opposition to take power this time around, they should raise voter awareness by stressing the need for political transparency, a move that could advance democracy in Thailand. Thais also need to know the truth about the suspected stock dealings by the Thaksin family."

SCHIEFFER